

Still Life

By Katelyn Morreale

The photographer adjust the settings of his camera and steps closer, his face intense as he waits for the light. The image in his mind haunts him. He knows exactly what he wants this shot to be, but it all depends on the light. Nothing else will do but the first moment of dawn, when the sun begins to break over the water.

His model is a beauty. Her face is a study in contrasts – full, soft lips and sharply defined cheekbones; dewy pale skin and sultry dark hair, curling riotously. Her eyes are closed as she holds the position she was placed in moments before, and long lashes brush the soft skin of her cheek. The dawning light accentuates the delicate curves of her still body while the ocean breeze gently lifts her hair and settles it again in the night-chilled sand.

The sea birds cream, but the photographer is deaf to their cries. His full attention is on the woman lying before him. She has been lying there for long moments, but he knows she won't move. Although the models he uses aren't recognized by magazines or fashion designers, they each have a certain draw to them... a quality that screams to be immortalized by the click of his camera.

The first rays of morning break free of the water. The photographer springs into actions, his camera snapping as he moves back and forth, shooting from various angles and distances, glorying in the morning light that reveals the subtle fire in the woman's dark hair and the soft glow it brings to her skin. He zooms in and out, the whir and click of his camera blending with the crashing of the waves and the call of the birds.

As always, he is disappointed when the light changes. Setting his camera down, he crouches next to the still figure on the sand and stokes her cheek. The chill of death has been slightly warmed by the dawn's rays.

A wry smile creeps across his face, and he rises to pack away his equipment, leaving the woman limp on the sand.